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ABSTRACT

This literature review focuses on the role of the community college in meeting the needs of adults seeking assistance in mid-life career changes. Factors such as longer life spans, better health, increased leisure time, and greater emphasis upon the quality of life increase the need for mid-life vocational counseling, leisure counseling programs, widow/widowers counseling, and pre-retirement workshops, as well as, the need for availability of lifelong educational opportunities. Family, job, and societal pressures can be seen to interact and produce four career patterns: routine (absence of career change), self-determined (career change because of desire rather than necessity), situationally determined (change brought about by outside pressures), and self-directed accommodation (change influenced by environmental pressures but shaped by individual choice). An assessment of the career pattern involved is one of the first steps in finding a second career, and one in which community college counseling programs should play a part. The effective accomplishment of the educational and counseling goals of a college requires the provision of services that meet the special needs and abilities of adult students, the organization of services into a pattern that is compatible with the character of the college, and the administration of services in ways that are mutually supportive. (A bibliography is included.) (MB)

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COUNSELING FOR SECOND CAREERS

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For: Higher Education 360
Dr. Schultz
3 July 1978

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INTRODUCTION

The right of middle-aged men and women to change their minds about what they want out of life has emerged as a new and legitimate demand. Human developmental choices do not stop with marriage or after forty. There is a marked increase in second careers in general, but particularly for those over thirty-five. (10)

On one hand we are being told that the mandatory retirement age is now seventy. On the other hand, life expectancy continues to rise and many people plan to retire earlier than ever before. A person born in 1900 could expect to spend only sixteen years of life doing something other than earning a living; for one born in 1970 the period rises to twenty-seven years. (24) The number of years immediately before and after retirement is equivalent to the time spent in preparation for living. (20) At age sixty-five, life expectancy is 15.3 years. (25) To top it all, the spry sixty-five-year-olds of each recent generation seem to be in much better physical and mental shape than the ones before. (24)

The implications for the community college in terms of these two groups of people are astounding. Older Americans have for many years supported an educational system in which they have had little or no opportunity to participate. (21) The day is coming, or is perhaps already here, when these older adults will demand their place in higher education. The community college is the logical choice to provide service to meet the expanding phenomenon of people changing vocations and searching for new challenges in life.

This paper will focus primarily with the first group above: those adults who turn to the community college for assistance in some sort of mid-life career change. Much of the information, however, is equally applicable to the group of young-old retirees who turn to the community college for help in finding new challenges and interests in life.

OVERVIEW

Older adults are returning to the campus in ever-increasing numbers. These are adults who, for whatever reason, want to change careers or life patterns in mid-life. Some of these adults may feel that they are in a mid-life crisis. Others, as Sheehy (23) points out, may be in transition from one life stage to another.

The traditional irreversibility of a single career has given way to career-hopping. According to Hoenninger (10), this is due to changes in job requirements, early completion of families, the ability to work and study simultaneously, the desire to lead a more satisfying life, early retirement, liberalized pension plans, and a rise in the available social security benefits.

Entine (5) indicates that there are four influences leading to mid-life redirection. The first of these has been the effect of the women's movement upon work role and life styles of women. The second is technological change. The third is unemployment and recession. He says that one-half of the unemployed are persons in mid-life. The fourth influence is retirement. The retirement age is dropping but life expectancy is growing. This creates what Bernice Neugarten calls the young-old of healthy, educated, newly retired people who are looking for new and varied life options.

Kimmel (11) seems to sum up the trends in society that increase the importance of adult transitions:

1. A longer life span and a growing proportion of the total population that are older people.
2. More leisure time and earlier retirement.
3. Better health, health care and education of adults.
4. More emphasis on the quality of life.
5. Greater tolerance for varied life styles.

The response on the part of community colleges to these developments in society will center around more mid-life vocational counseling, more leisure counseling programs, more widow/er counseling, and more preretirement workshops. These will be in addition to the services already offered and well established, such as family/marital counseling, academic advising, etc.

This author firmly agrees with Quirk (22), who states that educational opportunities should be available throughout the life span, not only to prepare the individual for future life, but also to guide her/him through

each stage of life. Even Ginzberg, the noted vocational theorist, has revised his theory and now says that occupational decision-making is an open-ended process that can co-exist throughout an individual's work life. (9) Quirk (22) suggests that the worlds of learning and earning need to be integrated with the option to do both throughout life.

In this sense we might want to take a look at our vocational training programs at entry level. Perhaps, as McMillan (16) suggests, we should be training people for multiple careers, since any one occupation may not represent the work of an individual's life. The whole idea behind developmental change is that things can never be settled once and for all. (23)

O'Banion (18) finds the task of helping students with vocational concerns difficult. He contends that the community college must be adept at helping students make educational and vocational choices that appear consistent with both their characteristics and the era in which they live. Yet in this day of open-endedness there is a great danger in having students finalize plans that will reduce their flexibility in future years.

A myth operates that adds to the complexity of the problem. As O'Neill (21) indicates, many of us buy into the idea that if we can just make the "right" choices as a young adult, we will be home safe by the time we are in our late thirties or early forties. If we just make the "right" choices, we will be guaranteed fulfillment for the rest of our life. Even though we see increasing evidence that this is a myth and not a fact, the idea persists. How is it possible to know at twenty what one will want at age forty? Or age fifty? It is difficult enough finding out at twenty what one wants at twenty!!

Sheehy (23) thinks that we will have made progress when we come to think of serial careers, not as signifying failure, but as a realistic way to prolong vitality. Mandel (14) corroborates that view. He maintains that we use many terms--adult education, continuing education, lifelong learning, recurrent education, or whatever--but that the net result is that we are exploring alternative social mechanisms for the continuous education of

our entire population. He goes on to say that the United States has a long history of resistance against long-range planning, and is only now beginning to consider adult education as a potentially fruitful area for attention. He suggests a holistic system of education that would enable the entire citizenry to pre-adapt, adapt, and re-adapt to change.

PRESSURES

McMillan (16) claims that when an individual is satisfied with her/his career, all is well. It is when some sort of dissatisfaction develops that the individual usually attempts to re-evaluate her/his position in the world of work.

Heddesheimer (9) has an interesting suggestion for looking at the sources of pressure for change in job. She suggests that pressure can come from the environment in the form of family pressures (divorce, death, kids leave home), job pressures (loss of job, demand of employer to upgrade skills, military retirement), or societal pressures (job satisfaction, the need to "make something of yourself"). Pressure can also come from the self in the sense that the person is looking for more satisfaction, wants to be more productive, more creative, or whatever. To the degree that these pressures from the environment and from the self operate, they produce one of four career patterns:

Pressures from Environment	Pressures from Self: LOW	Pressures from Self: HIGH
LOW	Routine Career Pattern	Self-Determined Career Pattern
HIGH	Situationally-determined career pattern	Self-directed Accommodation career pattern

In a routine career pattern, there is an absence of career change, perhaps only an uneventful series of job changes.

In a self-determined career pattern, change is brought about as a result of the individual's desire to change rather than the change being forced by environmental pressures. Reasons might include desire for more challenge or interest, more leisure, or more economic gain. Many people seeking a mid-career shift fall into this category.

A person in a situationally determined career pattern lacks self-drive. Job changes are determined by the environment. Military men who reach retirement without ever having considered civilian opportunities for employment are in this category.

The individual in a self-directed accommodation career pattern shapes the work situation in the face of environmental pressures to change jobs.

ASSESSMENT

McMillan (16) contends that the first step in looking at the possibility of finding a second career is a careful assessment of oneself in relation to what one does for a living. Is it the kind of work involved or the particular job that is discouraging? He thinks that the job should be considered an instrument rather than an end in itself. He indicates that other steps to be considered in choosing a second career are to consider one's own value system, and to look carefully at the discrepancy between one's original aspirations and level of achievement at mid-course.

Heddesheimer (9) reminds us also to be aware that ambivalence usually accompanies occupational change. While moving away from one thing, we are moving toward another. There may be a sense of loss at leaving a job behind, but also relief to be free of the negative aspects of that job. There may be excitement but also fear about the new, the untried, the unknown.

As part of some future scenario, Mandel (14) predicts that since lifelong learning is essential to self-fulfillment, some means will allow for easy exit from and reentry into the labor force so that the individual can enjoy educational opportunity without suffering loss of income or prestige. Closely related to this will be a high degree of tolerance for varying life styles.

Individuals of any age will be able to move in and out of the labor and learning forces, shift consumption standards, and change relationships without suffering excessive social, economic, or legal penalties. It is never too late--or too early--to learn to shift gears. (21)

ADULT STUDENTS

Adult learning ability does not slack off in a generalized way; it is in the ability to absorb unfamiliar or inapplicable material that a loss is noticed later in life. (23) Doctors are now finding that many diminishing capacities are simply caused by disuse, rather than an inevitable and fixed biological decline, and that these capacities, even those of our brain, can be appreciably modified by outside means throughout life. Although the number of neurons--brain cells--each person has is set at birth, the quantity of certain other cells in the brain increases as it matures, and continues to increase with experience and new skills we acquire. Stimulation, activity and increased blood flow can all help our brains to function better. In other words, if you think your brain is too old and slow for you to learn anything new or take on a new career, you are simply wrong. (20)

According to O'Banion (18), adult students of today are sobered but not subdued, concerned but not collected, and socially conscious, though highly individualized. Gallagher (7) reports that the adult may bring maturity and experience to the college scene, but may still have a greater need for counseling than her/his younger counterpart. Studies done by Nejedlo in 1974 and Thompson in 1971 and reported in Krings (13) found five major differences between adult and youth:

1) In the learning setting, the adult student has a different self-concept; he is used to more independence and responsibility.
2) The adult has had more experience because she/he has lived longer.
3) The young person enters education with the idea of postponed use of learnings; the adult has been used to problem-solving procedures which cause her/him to want to use learnings immediately.
4) Young students typically confront similar developmental tasks, whereas the adult population is more varied in age range, hence more varied in developmental stages.
5) Youth are not typically as motivated to learn as adults.

O'Brien (19) declares that an adult student faces differences which focus on vocational and academic factors and on personal-social adjustment. The academic factor in particular, that of being unfamiliar with formal instruction and the rigorous demands of learning, can be formidable obstacles for the adult returning to school.

Another difference reported by Krings (13) is that adults are more keenly aware of the importance of career planning. Adults may feel that learning for the sake of learning is frivolous and an unjustifiable expense. Finances are often a central concern for the adult student. Sheehy (23) agrees, saying that the "I should" at twenty gives way to the "I want" of thirty and becomes the "I must" at forty. Along these same lines, Hoenninger (10) cautions that there is a sense of extreme importance attached to decisions made by people in mid-life. Be careful not to let a person discard a lifestyle that can be recycled.

Neugarten in Ullmann (25) says that for people between forty and seventy the perception shifts from seeing the environment as one that rewards boldness and risk-taking to a perception of the environment as complex and dangerous. There is an increasing concern with inner life, a preoccupation with personal needs, a withdrawal from complex involvement with other people in the environment.

Heddesheimer (9) claims that the shifts in the view of one's self and one's world that happen in middle age are different for men and women. She sees men moving from a focus on mastering the outer world to a more passive and introspective (nurturing) stance. Women, on the other hand, who have been passive and nurturing, from forty on are more concerned with conquering the world and mastering themselves and a job.

Marjorie Fiske Lowenthal in Entine (5) concludes that men have more in common with other men in facing mid-life change and women with other women than men and women do facing similar changes simultaneously. She finds a key difference in their networks of personal resources; she thinks women tend to adapt better to change than men because women have developed better

networks of interpersonal resources in terms of friends, fellow workers, relatives, and professional counselors. She finds that men of middle age have weaker interpersonal relations to serve as a resource against crisis.

It would be a mistake of great magnitude to lump all adults of middle age or at mid-life in one pot and pronounce a sentence of equal treatment and counseling for all. In counseling adults it is important to remember that they have divergent needs. Grabowski (8) tells us of Porter's study which specified these needs, some of which seem special to adults:

1. lack of self confidence in one's ability to learn
2. unrealistic expectations of the program
3. conflicting values and attitudes.
4. theoretical or irrelevant learning tasks
5. seeking help too late or in the wrong places
6. lack of efficient reading/study habits
7. press of time
8. significance of long-range goals
9. implications of family life
10. greater life experiences
11. employment and job circumstances
12. mechanics of attending class
13. past memories as obstacles
14. voluntary basis of continuing education
15. lack of continuity with faculty and counselors

In conclusion of this section, it seems that the community college is rapidly becoming the great distributive agency in American education. (3) Here the student can make a fuller and perhaps more accurate inventory of her/his characteristics; test her/his aptitudes and interests. Here the individual can revise vocational and educational plans by bringing them more nearly in line with her/his reasonable expectations. The student is likely to do these things effectively only if the college recognizes the process of self-discovery as one of its principal purposes, and if the institution's personnel services are adequate in scope and quality to give the student the necessary assistance.

PROBLEMS

O'Banion (18) states, "To date there has been a paucity of research in the area of student services." This makes it difficult to draw meaningful conclusions about their effectiveness. Berry (2) agrees that there is hardly any worthwhile documentation of a research nature about counseling adults in education. Some studies are beginning to appear, but many of them deal only with women.

Grabowski (8) suggests two studies worth noting. The first was done in Louisiana in 1966-67. It concluded that guidance and counseling does assist the student in the areas of education, occupation and social relations. The second study examined the guidance program of the Los Angeles City Adult Schools. The study found:

1) a predominance of educational over vocational counseling
2) extremely limited informational services
3) inadequate data on the student's personal, social and mental status
4) little attention given to the student's vocational interests, aptitudes, preferences, personality, out-of-school activities or work experience
5) too much expenditure of working time on routine clerical duties because of personnel shortages
6) lack of suitable training and experience among about half the guidance counselors
7) poor provisions for follow-up services

Grabowski (8) goes on to say that even at the institutions where there were trained and qualified counselors, their load was overwhelming. He found the ratio at one of the better institutions to be 1 to 600. He indicates that at some of the major institutions the ratio is much larger. He adds that another problem is that many administrators mouth the need for and the usefulness of counselors, but they don't back up their words with dollars.

Krings (13) thinks that a major obstacle to developing a viable counseling program for adult learners involves the visibility and accessibility of the counseling center itself. She contends that a progressive counseling center must extend its open hours in order to

serve all students. This author would add that counseling services should be taken to where the clients/students find it easy to utilize the services. To expect an adult student to find her/his way to a counseling center in a certain building on a certain campus at a certain time of day is totally unrealistic.

Other difficulties center around misinformation. As Mrs. Montgomery (17) said, "The right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing." (She asked the same question of three different people regarding the transferability of a course, and was given three different answers.)

A further problem seems to be that there are so many special interest groups who need special help. Minority groups, women, foreign students, veterans, the handicapped, all have special needs. It is suggested (1) that there be a specialist in women's affairs for every 1,000 female students enrolled. Extend that figure to all special groups and the implications are tremendous!

Hardee is cited in O'Banion (18) with respect to views held by faculty members who fail to be enthusiastic about counselors:

1) The view that the relationship between teacher and student is a near-sacred one, a private affair with no interference from the counselor.

2) The view that "anybody can counsel" and that "an occasional pat on the back" is all that is needed.

3) The view that students who are old enough to come to college are mature enough to have solved all their problems; thus, there is little need for any professionally trained counselors on the college staff.

4) The view that only a few students really need the professional counselor's help, and counselors may be using these as objects of clinical experiments.

5) The view that, since there are counselors on campus, the teachers can leave to them most student problems, especially any concern for the "Whole student". The faculty member can be concerned only with lectures, examinations, and scholarly papers.

6) The view that faculty advisement takes badly needed time away from teaching, and the teacher is too swamped trying to be a good teacher to be able to be an advisor to students also.

Although some of those views are directed more toward four-year institutions, some observations seem equally pertinent to the community college.

Counselors also hold disabling views, such as:

1) The view that the counselor alone has discovered the "total individual". Such counselors assume that the faculty member, immersed in a subject field, has no real knowledge of the student and no wish to acquire such knowledge.

2) The view that the counselors on campus represent a very select circle, who can communicate only within the group, and that outside this group are the other people--teachers, administrators, etc.

3) The view that all students need counseling, regardless of whether they feel they do. A motto for this would be, "We will help you with your problem, even to finding one for you."

4) The view that faculty members are well-intentioned but misguided and inept and, therefore, mishandle student problems. Counselors need to "protect" students from them.

5) The view that there are only a small select number of students with interesting problems that can be fruitfully used in professional circles. The "run of the mill" stuff is not for them.

6) The view that the faculty should not be included in counseling or academic advisement, because students tend to think of them as counselors and in doing so hurt the counseling profession and its work.

O'Banion clearly states that views such as these have no place in the community college and violate its spirit. (18)

An unspoken criticism is often that the results of counseling can not be concretely seen. McMillan cautions us to remember that counseling is an exploratory process to which the professional brings her/his knowledge of human development and the world of work for the adult client to consider in order to determine her/his own goals and aspirations. There are no guarantees that the process will terminate in the client having all questions answered or that they will in fact change careers. What should develop is a relationship in which the exchange of information and insights leads to an analysis on the part of the client so that they understand what it takes to get where they want to go. (16).

STUDENT PERSONNEL PROGRAMS

O'Banion claims that the compelling purpose of the student personnel services is the individualizing of the total impact of the college community upon each individual student. He goes on to say that the first requisite of a good student personnel program in a junior college is a favorable climate of opinion concerning both it and the junior college as reflected in the attitudes held by the staff members and students. A second requirement—and an obvious one--is that of qualified personnel. A third and last requirement is that student personnel services be organized in a manner that enables them to permeate the entire campus. There is considerable difference of opinion as to whether centralized services or decentralized services best serve the purpose. Implementation of student personnel programs differs from college to college, but the emphasis on services that facilitate effective student development remains constant. (18)

More specifically, Grabowski (8) suggests these guidance roles:

1. aid in the adjustment of the individual adult learner by providing a climate in each set of learning experiences which promote desirable learner adjustment.
2. integrate occupational, educational and personal-social adjustment information into the adult learner's experience.
3. encourage the adult learners to avail themselves of the guidance programs.
4. provide information to help keep the adult learners personal records current.
5. be alert to the use of community agency facilities that may assist in reaching the objectives of the guidance program.
6. assist the adult learners in developing and maintaining a pattern of attitudes and behavior that facilitate maximum learning.

Another way to understand the role of the counselor is to examine what tasks the counselor performs. Grabowski (8) suggests these:

> assist in course selection; help make long-range educational or vocational plans; help define and resolve personal problems; select, administer, score tests and interpret results; take care of publicity, advertising, recruiting, registering and whatever else needs doing.

Collins (3) delineates some twenty-one essential student personnel functions in order to effect desired behavioral change. They are:

Orientation Functions

1. Precollege Information: dissemination of information to prospective clients and their parents.
2. Student Induction: geographical, academic, social, attitudinal and psychological orientation.
3. Group orientation: study skills, test interpretation, educational planning, rules and regulations.
4. Career Information: help narrow occupational choice.

Appraisal Functions

5. Personnel records: cumulative file of educational, psychological, physical, personal development
6. Educational testing: aptitude, interests, values, achievement, diagnostic
7. Applicant appraisal: subsumes all devices to effect proper placement and to assist students in decision-making and planning

7a. Health Appraisal: health records, health counseling

Consultation Functions

8. Student counseling: clarifying, decision making, formulating plans, resolving problems
9. Student advisement: selection of courses, transfer, study methods
10. Applicant consulting: information pertinent to interpretation of tests and other data

Participation Functions

11. Co-curricular activities: cultural activities, special interest groups, any activity that contributes to educational growth and development
12. Student self-government: citizenship training

Regulation Functions

13. Student registration: registration, class changes, withdrawals
14. Academic regulation: probation policies, pre-auditing for graduation, petitions for readmission
15. Social regulations: social amenities, moral and ethical conduct

Service Functions

16. Financial aids: loans, scholarships, part-time jobs, budget management
17. Placement: employment for students and prospective employers

Organizational Functions

18. Program articulation: 2-way flow with feeder schools and colleges of transfer, lines of communication with community
19. In-service education: consultants, research, workshops, seminars
20. Program evaluation: follow-up, development of norms
21. Administrative organization: adequate staffing, housing, evaluation, and effective relation to total mission of the college

O'Banion (18) suggests an analysis of student personnel work by broad function.

I Routine services FOR students and college
Colleges are really run by clerks: catalogs, calendars, schedules, records, transcripts, enrollment lists, grades, books, money, etc. Most of this work can be done more accurately and more rapidly by good clerks than by preoccupied professionals.

II Professional services for students (by working with students)
making decisions, choosing major, career plans, select courses, scholarships, health, friends, sex, help shape personal philosophy. These functions require counselors, psychologists, physicians, nurses, social workers, placement officers, activity directors, financial aid officers, tutors, etc.

III College-community activities with students
work with students and townspeople to develop new dimensions.

In conclusion, O'Banion (18) says that the effective accomplishment of the goals of a college requires the provision of services that meet student needs, an organization of services into a pattern that is compatible with the character of the college, and administration of the services in ways that are mutually supportive, and that collectively reinforce college goals.

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